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MCGUINTY GOVERNMENT INVESTING IN BETTER HEALTH CARE FOR KINGSTON AREA RESIDENTS

Funding Increase For Kingston General Hospital And Hotel Dieu Hospital Will Strengthen Services

KINGSTON – The McGuinty government is continuing to invest in better health care for Kingston and area residents with $11.3 million in funding for two Kingston hospitals, Health and Long-Term Care Minister George Smitherman announced today.

"Our government is ensuring Ontario's hospitals have the resources they need to strengthen critical programs and services," Smitherman said. "This investment provides additional support to the hospital to ensure it can continue to provide Kingston area residents with access to quality health care services."

The government is providing:

- A base funding increase of $2.6 million with $4.9 million in one-time funding to the Kingston General Hospital. This brings the hospital's total base allocation for 2006/07 to $226.6 million, a 6.5 per cent increase in base funding over 2005/06.

- A base funding increase of $1.1 million with $2.7 million in one-time funding to the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of the Hotel Dieu of Kingston. This brings the hospital's total base allocation for 2006/07 to $46.3 million, a 7.4 per cent increase in funding over 2005/06.

Prior to receiving this funding, both hospitals underwent peer reviews to help them achieve a balanced budget. Through this process, CEOs of hospitals that are of similar size and type reviewed the hospital's operations and provided them with specific recommendations on how to improve their efficiency and find a workable plan to balance their budgets.

Funding for both hospitals is conditional on each hospital signing their accountability agreements that commits them to balance their budgets.

"Kingston General Hospital is working diligently to reduce costs and uncover every efficiency and revenue-generating opportunity possible," said Kingston General Hospital President and Chief Executive Officer Joe de Mora. "The government has recognized our hospital's unique challenges and, with this funding increase, we continue working together to best meet the health care needs of our community."

"This significant investment, along with previously announced funding to reduce wait times and make needed upgrades at our hospital signals that this government is putting patients first," said Hotel Dieu Executive Director, Hugh Graham.

In addition to the 2006/07 base funding, Kingston General Hospital has also received:

- A total of $7.1 million in one-time funding as part of the Wait Times Strategy to perform 430 additional cardiac procedures, 390 more MRI exams, 75 additional cancer surgeries and 25 more hip and knee total joint replacements.

- A commitment of $165,937 in capital funding in 2006/07 to make needed upgrades to keep their facility in top condition for patients.

In addition to the 2006/07 base funding, the Religious Hospitallers of St. Joseph of the Hotel Dieu of Kingston has also received:

- A total of $351,800 in one-time funding as part of the Wait Times Strategy to perform 400 additional cataract surgeries and 724 more CT exams.

- A commitment of $153,703 in one-time funding in 2006/07 to make needed upgrades to keep their facility in top condition for patients.

"I am proud of our government's record of success as we continue to move forward with our health care partners," Smitherman said. "Today's announcement allows Kingston General and Hotel Dieu to get on with doing the day-to-day job of providing essential and vital health services to Ontarians."

Today's initiative is part of the McGuinty government's plan for innovation in public health care, building a system that delivers on three priorities – keeping Ontarians healthy, reducing wait times and providing better access to doctors and nurses.

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